For the sake of the soul alone, the Universe exists.
—PATANJALI

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A CLIMAX OF EVOLUTION

THERE is a sense in which the Theosophical Movement has one end, and one end alone. It is to generate in the world the spontaneous motion of free souls. The statement of this object, like that of all ultimate purposes, is a contradiction in terms, for how can you "generate" *spontaneous* activity? The word, perhaps, should be "induce" rather than generate. To induce is to arouse, to cause to become manifest. But even so there are difficulties. The goal is a society of awakened souls—souls which are, in the Platonic conception, "self-moving units," and the self-moving unit is one which is self-aroused, whose energies and motions are *self*-induced.

Fortunately, we have an analogue in all teaching activities. The teacher functions as a stimulus to the capacity for self-arousal in his pupils. He cannot, without opposing the creative process, do the pupil's work for him, yet he must try to "get the pupil going." The paradox is resolved by recognizing that, however wide the gap of knowledge and understanding which separates teacher and pupil, there is still a common essence of being in which both share. To the extent that teacher and pupil are both that essence, each participates in the other's acts. And to the extent that this community of being is felt or known, the two are united by the bond of love, which becomes the basis of communication by the teacher, and of the reception of inspiration by the pupil.

Each man, each human being, is the complex host of several levels of life and intelligence. Each man is a world, embodying presences

in him which represent the larger world. So it is that the fibres of life in man respond in sympathy with the vibratory rhythms and configurations of living motion about him. The "great" teacher is one who has learned to control and balance the responses which go on within his being, so that they conform to and repeat the universal harmonies which fulfill the evolution of the world. A *teaching* is a work which sets down in some symbolic form the teacher's response to the world and its meanings. By the teaching, the pupil is helped to find within himself some scheme of parallel responses, which are *his own*. They are his own, yet not his privately or exclusively, since it is still the universal rhythm which one seeks to feel and respond to. In the dance of life there are always leaders and followers, yet the followers must *dance;* they must move of their own strength and motion, and somewhere, some time, during the evolution of the movements pursued, an individuality of motion surges into being in the one who began as "follower"; now he rises to a call from universal life which comes to him directly; he is all at once truly himself. But he becomes himself by finding the surges of universal being in the moments of his own determination.

So with all the great forms of human expression. A Vyasa composes the *Bhagavad-Gita,* and by the wonder of a climactic moment in the unfolding and fulfillment of universal cycles, the experience of the human heart is generalized in a way that touches the sensibility of all who have been born or are to be born within a long epoch of historical development. The artist-poet-teacher strikes chords that resound and move the hearts of the human race throughout the age. Somehow, meanings are turned into submissive captives in this work of philosophic genius. In the *Gita,* then, we feel the rhythmic splendor of a teacher whose rapport of understanding encompasses a wide diversity of life.

Such is the work of men in the world, and not alone of men, but of all beings. A field of grain, ripening in the sun, the stalks swaying in slender ritual before the breeze, is declaring the nature of its being, announcing its presence and its relation to the world. The wrath of the sea in a wild storm reflects another facet of natural energies. All nature is a gallery of images, now at rest, now in tumult, all bespeaking and embodying the movement of being in its revolutions and transformations. The bee darting in rapier strokes from hive to blossom is a study in concentration. The moth which batters

itself to ruin against the light of its unfeeling god is a muted allegory of intelligence misled and self-deceived.

The poet and the artist are beings whose consciousness has become so engrossed by the fascinations of all this imagery that they turn themselves into Aeolian harps and conscious echoes of the sounds of nature, of the cries of life. Their works are as inevitable and as faithful as the spreading, if broken, vibrations of the sea. It becomes their role to hold a mirror up to existence, to catch and reflect the glancing light of the moment and to redirect it by their own consciousness to illuminate a hidden symmetry, or to frame with dramatic unity some aspect of the pain of life.

Now and then, in the ordinary relations of daily existence, we encounter an individual whose natural concern is with meanings—who deals, essentially and spontaneously, with the motions of intelligence. Curiously, we find ourselves a little surprised when such a person reveals a knowledge of some class of mundane facts. Everyone has to have some acquaintance with facts, but in this instance it becomes plain that "facts" are nothing but the gross, raw material of meanings—and that the meanings are, actually, the only *living* facts in human life.

The poet, too, must eat and sleep. The dancer, perhaps, is a mother who has borne children and kept house. The teacher is also a man with problems and a home to maintain. These are all "facts," but they are not the facts which make the meanings we treasure and respond to. The difference is the difference between soul and body —between the ground we stand on and the rising elevations of what we build—our *meanings*.

The Theosophical Movement is concerned with the discovery by each one of the essential being which moves to self-consciousness within. All the records of all the teachings, all the works of art, all the songs of longing and response, all the expressions of the mind which relate to this purpose are but the cosmos of consciousness, the external world of self-awareness. Let a man feel in himself the unlimbering motions of the genius so long held prisoner by the partisan images of lesser forms of life, and the Theosophical Movement is in that instant fulfilled and made to triumph. Once again, there has been a viable birth of soul. Once again time falls away, space loses its confining dimensions, and another increment of unfailing light begins to shine.

Each age of man has its own excellence, its own sort of "peak-experience." Our age is indeed a wonder of contradictions and secret resolutions. It puts together climaxes of every sort. The carnage of the present—the present century—has no parallel save, perhaps, in continental devastations of geologic proportion. It is an age filled with both negation and promise. Its fears are matched by existential courage, its dislocations lose their magnitude in the light of an emerging consciousness of human stature and destiny. The curtain, one might say, is going up on a great last act of the drama of the soul, of which the appointments, the setting, and the chorus are appropriate to the hour of trial and achievement.

THE MYSTIQUE OF CHOICE

As far as we can judge, man differs from the rest of creation by his wider range of freedom and by the greater extent to which he can, and does, exercise free will. Not only does he have a large degree of latitude in his decision to act or not to act, but, more importantly, he is often aware of the reasons that make him select the cause to which he dedicates his action. Free will, however, implies choice and a motive; and motive is a matter of faith. In final analysis, choice is rarely possible without some vision of the future. In fact, it is the possibility, nay the inescapable need to choose, which gives its grandeur to the human condition, and which also accounts for its tragic quality. . . .

In all cultures that we know of, there have been men who have shunned the abundant life and who have chosen instead asceticism, suffering, and otherworldliness. Some have been saints intoxicated with God, others have been very reasonable and otherwise ordinary persons obeying the dictates of their conscience. Socrates has become a legendary figure not so much by reason of his philosophy as by his willingness to accept death rather than violate the laws to which he owed the nature of his very self.

—RENÉ DUBOS

MISUNDERSTOOD BIBLICAL TRADITIONS

Fear of God

II

A PORTION of present psychological unrest, at least, may be traceable to a distorted concept of Deity. There is an old saying that "the corruption of the best produces the worst," which, in our present study, would seem to suggest that if men's ideas about God and religion are *off* the true, then everything is probably "off" proportionately. Whether the distortion is due to the original scriptures themselves, to the half-taught disciples and Church Fathers who were left to carry on the tradition, to the translators who admittedly experienced great difficulty in finding English equivalents for Greek and Hebrew terms, or to ourselves, will probably have to be left to future historians or to each individual to decide. Is it not reasonable to assume, however, that at least a portion of the fault rests with the language, and also with the fact that few so-called religious people of any creed are really serious students of their texts?

Where is the sincere Christian or Jew of this day, for example, who has given prolonged thought to the question of why it is that the term "God," as used in the first chapter of Genesis, changes abruptly and without apparent reason into the "Lord God" of the second chapter? How many have taken time to look into the derivations and possibly unsuspected meanings of such original Hebrew words as *El, Elohim,* and *Elyon*—the latter being translated in the Bible as "the Most High," or *El-Shaddai,* rendered "God Almighty?" How many are aware of the fact that in the first sentence of the Old Testament, the Hebrew *Elohim,* there translated "God," is a plural term?

In the *Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance* (p. 147) it is written: "Elohim is a plural name, but the plural seems to be 'intensive,' and often implies 'fulness of might.' It occurs more than 2,500 times, and is always rendered *God* in the English versions." Nothing is here said of the fact, however, that if the first sentence of Chapter I of Genesis were made to read, as it obviously should: "In the begin-

ning the *Elohim* [plural] created the heaven and the earth," the Bible teaching on cosmogenesis would then be in full accord with Buddhist, Brahmin and Zoroastrian cosmogonies, with the teaching of the early Christian Gnostics, and also with both ancient and modern Theosophy! For each of these old scriptures postulates Hosts of intelligent Powers and Forces, which in their totality are the *Demiurgos,* the collective "Creator" of the Universe. In the effort to make of their Deity "the one and only living God," to the exclusion of all others (as though there could ever be more than one Absolute Deity in the Universe, any more than the one Universal Space can ever be divided or chopped up into parts), the Christian sectarians, entrusted with the work of translation, have not only disfigured their own Sacred Scriptures, but have made of God *a person,* necessarily limited, and created in the likeness of their own fancies—a sorry caricature indeed of the "Most High."

The age-old dispute between monotheism, the teaching that there is but one Deity in the Universe, and polytheism, or the idea of a plurality of gods, still remains unsettled. Judaism and Christianity, of course, hold to the former—though there is obviously as much support in the Bible for the one as for the other. Is it possible that both of these theologies may be true? Might it be that just as there is the One Universal Ocean—which is the source from which the many smaller bodies of water have come and must return—so, perchance, there is the One Supreme God, which is the Source and Sustainer of every power, force, or Being that ever was, is, or shall be? The philosophical idea of "the One and the Many," or of Unity in Diversity, is as old as thinking mankind. And this teaching is the only one, it would seem, that is consistent throughout with both reason and logic, and with the biblical doctrine of "The Most High God." For how can there be a Most High God without other lesser deities to give the superlative its value?

> The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords. (Deut. 10:17.)
>
> There be gods many, and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father. (I Cor. 8:5-6.)

The teaching of the One and the Many, then, is manifestly present seem to have made little or no distinction between them. Merging in the Bible. But the divines who undertook the work of translation all deities, high and low, into one, and fastening the attributes and

qualities of all the inferior angels and demons upon the One Unchanging Reality, they have only succeeded in confusing men's minds. By what sort of mental gymnastics is one to understand, for example, how a Deity which "changes not" (Mal. 3:6), is "incorruptible" (Rom. 1:23), which is "eternal, immortal, invisible" (I Tim. 1:17), can be synonymous with a God who is by turns wrathful, angry, repentant and pleased? How can such finite feelings as love, hate, and anger be ascribed to THAT which is infinite and omnipresent?

The teaching of present-day Theosophy is in full accord with the Hindu, Greek, and early Christian ideas about "gods many and lords many," but it postulates as its first fundamental proposition the One Supreme Deity above all. The latter, Theosophy holds, is Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable, on which all speculation is impossible. Like shoreless Space itself, this One Supreme transcends the power of human conception and can only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought—in the words of Mandukya, "unthinkable and unspeakable."

Nor is it to the credit of Western nations that their "just and living God," instead of being made the "guardian of eternal Law," as with the Hindu Deity, has been fashioned into an unpredictable being of *caprice*. Solomon makes the promise that "the righteous is delivered from trouble" (Prov. 11:8), and that "He who walks in integrity walks securely." (Prov. 10:9.) But how many individuals are really convinced of the truthfulness of these words? How many people trust their Deity as faithfully and as completely as they trust, for example, the unchanging Laws of Nature? How many are there, brought up in the Christian and Jewish tradition, who do not endow their God with the right and the power *to put aside the Law,* and to strike down, if such is his pleasure, whomsoever and whatsoever he will? Because God has all power, they say, and is accountable to no one—not even to the inviolable Laws of the Universe—he can do whatsoever he pleases. He can bring floods and earthquakes, pestilences and epidemics. He can cause the ocean to overflow its shores and droughts to scorch the face of the land. He can destroy cities, as was done in early Judaic times, and he can bring to naught the honest labors of man. All this—if we understand the minds of the faithful correctly—*outside of Law,* and for no other reason than that such is "the will of God"! Is it any wonder that the hearts and

minds of the religious can be ravaged by feelings of insecurity, and that *fear of God,* instead of being salutary and uplifting, became coarse, degrading and cold?

It is not so many years ago that some individuals labored under the delusion that when they became ill, it was God, the Father, who was the cause of their affliction; that for some reason, known only to the "Most High," they were being thus punished.

> We stand bewildered before the mystery of our own making and the riddles of life that *we will not* solve, and then accuse the great Sphinx of devouring us. But verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doing in this or another life. (H. P. Blavatsky.)

This is the oriental doctrine of *Karma,* the teaching of the One Supreme Law of the Universe which, in the words of Solomon (Ps. 62:12), "renderest to every man according to his work." In *The Secret Doctrine* I (p. 152), H. P. Blavatsky makes the statement that "Deity is Law, and *vice versa,*" which would seem to imply that God and Karma are really one. But Karma, it is said, neither punishes nor rewards; it only adjusts effect to cause, bringing to each the exact results of his own actions—in the process of which adjustment the individuals and nations upon whom it operates experience pleasure or pain. Its one decree, say the books, is that justice, harmony, and equilibrium shall be restored.

In the opinion of the Theosophist, it is the element of caprice in such an imagined Deity that has injured both Judaism and Christianity and has transformed the higher, spiritual quality of *respect for God,* which *should* give strength, courage, and understanding, into a lower manasic state of terror before all life. It is because of the disconnection of Deity from Law, in men's minds, and the belief that no one can know what God might do—when he might decide to strike—that men lack the courage to stand on principles, and to say with Solomon (Ps. 27:1): "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Although fire may either heal or kill, construct or destroy, it is essentially beneficent, and can always be depended upon to act in an orderly and a lawful way.

Fire, which is purely impersonal, never evinces any intent to harm. Why is it not equally reasonable to assume that God, who is likewise "no respecter of persons," never evinces any intent to either

punish or reward? In either case, when one gets burnt or reaps misfortune, it is the individual himself, by placing himself in the path of the just, though compassionate, Law—who is to blame. "God," said St. Paul (Heb. 12:29), "is a consuming fire." Those who question the impersonal and lawful nature of Deity, and who cling to the belief that God capriciously metes out deserts, good and bad, without regard of merit, might do well to re-consider Paul's further unequivocal words on the subject (Gal. 6:7): "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Those sincere Christians who, in the light of this verse, still wish to ascribe their good and ill fortunes to the "will of God," are entitled, of course, to their views. But to the Theosophist, who is a student of comparative religion, the foregoing verses are evidence of the universality of the *doctrine of Karma,* and of the old Theosophical view that all great religions have sprung from a common Source.

At few places in any of the world's scriptures is the idea of *compensation,* or Karma, more clearly set forth, perhaps, than in the book of Jeremiah—though not there called by that name. In almost every instance of punishment (see chapters five through nine), after stating the offense of the people, the Lord says: *"therefore"* shall your retribution be thus and so—the term *therefore* seeming clearly to connect the penalty thus decreed with the thought and the offense of the offender. Other direct statements in the Bible, indicating that the Law of Karma is *inherent* in man and all life, are the following:

> Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the Lord your God, when he led you in the way? (Jer. 2:17.)
>
> Your ways and your doings have brought this upon you. This is your doom, and it is bitter; it has reached your very heart. (Jer. 4:18.)
>
> Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing evil upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not given heed to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. (Jer. 6:19.)

What, then, shall be the nature and quality of our "fear" (respect) of God? Shall we fear with that paralyzing sense of terror and distrust one feels in the presence of an angry, unpredictable, human being, not knowing from moment to moment what to expect? Or shall we "fear the Lord" with that same exalted sense of awe, and trust (only far more reverent) that one feels at the Ocean, or when using Fire, or in the presence of any one of the utterly dependable Laws of Nature—knowing for a certainty that whatever good or ill

effects we experience are in exact proportion to our own wisdom or unwisdom in thought, feeling, and act? St. Paul's statement about sowing and reaping, and Isaiah's promise that "he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall possess the land," seem to leave little doubt that Deity is mathematically just, in no sense less trustworthy and reliable than the unerring Laws of the Universe instituted from all eternity.

"My only fear," said Confucius, "is the fear of doing wrong." In the view of the Theosophist, the only *fear* that does any good and is worthy of the human being, that stabilizes the mind and makes a person think before he acts, is that fear or *caution* which springs from and is rooted in a knowledge of the Divine Law of Karma, *which is one with God*. This, beyond any doubt, is what Solomon and all the other prophets meant by "the fear of God"—that is, a salutary fear (or caution) of that LAW which, in the poem of Buddha:

> . . . will not be contemned of any one;
> Who thwarts it loses, and who serves it gains;
> The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,
> The hidden ill with pains.
>
> It seeth everywhere and marketh all:
> Do right—it recompenseth! do one wrong—
> The equal retribution must be made,
> Though Dharma tarry long.
>
> It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true
> Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;
> Times are as nought, tomorrow it will judge,
> Or after many days.
>
> Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,
> Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
> The heart of it is Love, the end of it
> Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!
>
> *The Light of Asia*

ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE— "THE SECRET DOCRINE"

III

TRUE, the very conception of a genuine "Secret Doctrine" will appear to the profane reader rather as a weird, fantastic dream than as a possible reality. H.P.B. herself recognized this:

> This is only natural and as it should be, since for years such was the impression made upon the humble writer of these pages herself. Born and bred in European, matter-of-fact and presumably civilized countries, she assimilated the foregoing with the utmost difficulty. But there are proofs of a certain character which become irrefutable and are undeniable in the long run, to every earnest unprejudiced mind. (*S.D.* II, 438.)

If this is the impression and problem encountered by H.P.B. in assimilating the material of *The Secret Doctrine,* who are we to expect the contents to dance out in clear view by way of all those materialistic phrases and ways of thinking to which our ears and brains are most accustomed? Can we legitimately sift the doctrine, pick and choose according to preconceptions, and "refuse to be puzzled"? This last is mentioned more than once by H.P.B. as the traditional method of teaching, *i.e.,* the creating of perplexity, which, with continued study and patience is relieved and resolved by the unfolding of a higher state of perception. Yet this can only be done when the old is destroyed and, *through a process of transmutation,* made into the new. To refuse to be puzzled is like denying the reality or necessity of parental processes; to proudly insist upon using our "selectivity" is like chopping a man into pieces and studying only arms or thumbs as the means of knowing the body. Even admitting that arms and thumbs may be a proper and natural area of emphasis, we destroy a higher understanding of their function in the larger context if we do not look beyond their special usefulness.

In scientific work one's discrimination may quite often be voluntarily suspended in order to cover a certain assimilative stage—that is, a scientist might choose a certain line of experimentation, then spend twenty or thirty years in research before again beginning an active evaluational process. The life of Madame Curie and Albert

Einstein are excellent illustrations of this.

Of course, in a certain sense one never shuts off his discrimination. The evaluational process constantly proceeds, yet the student or scientist bent upon a certain approach may decide *not to take action* on his evaluations before a certain quota of work has been done. An anatomist might study the human body for years before suddenly discovering vital connections between what were once apparently unrelated parts; without those long years of perseverance, the sudden discovery or recognition would not have become possible. H.P.B. mentions this problem in many places throughout *The Secret Doctrine*. One of her reminders is a quotation from Montaigne:

> It is a sottish presumption to disdaine and condemne that for false which unto us seemeth to beare no show of likelihood or truth: which is an ordinarie fault in those who perswade themselves to be of more sufficiencie than the vulgar sort.
>
> But reason hath taught me, that so resolutely to condemne a thing for false and impossible, is to assume unto himself the advantage to have the bounds and limits of God's will, and the power of our common Mother Nature tied to his sleeve, and that there is no greater folly in the world than to reduce them to the measure of our capacitie and bounds of our sufficiencie.
>
> If we term those things monsters or miracles to which our reason cannot attain, how many doe such daily present themselves unto our sight? Let us consider through what cloudes, and how blinde-folde we are led to the knowledge of most things that passe our hands; verily we shall finde it is rather custome than Science that receiveth, the strangenesse of them from us; and that those things, were they newly presented unto us, wee should doubtless deeme them as much or more unlikely and incredible than any other. (*S.D.* II, 340.)

Despite the admitted difficulty of our subject, we are assured that there are "proofs of an irrefutable character" that will become apparent to the persevering student, one who loves Truth for its own sake and demands nothing in exchange. One of the most powerful proofs that may loom on the horizon of such a student is the catalytic character of *The Secret Doctrine;* or, as another student once remarked: "It was not the knowledge per se from *The Secret Doctrine* that began to cement into a continuing and neutral study of the entire book, but rather the recognition that it caused a process of mental growth to occur, becoming so-to-speak a *metaphysical mother,* nourishing differently with each new reading."

Yet it would seem that this sort of mental nourishment cannot be

best supplied unless there is a certain rhythm to our work. Just as we do not feed the stomach one day and give it nothing the next, but feed it by a pattern and design natural to the body, so one must feed the mind. If we can once conceive and follow a pattern of study, then we may more deeply realize how chaotic and disorderly so-called "every-day" life actually is, especially when viewed from the level of its mental activity.

This disorder and chaos destroy one's ability to perceive more inclusive patterns, just as the savage, mentioned by Madame Blavatsky, suffered from an inability to see in a painting any more than a maze of color—whereas to the trained eye of a European, there was a beautiful landscape. (That word "trained" should give us food for thought, for it would seem to be that by taking on a quota of work or study, voluntarily devised and followed, we begin to get some control of our mind.)

If it seems strange that we can possess a sense or aptitude and still have no control of it—even more, have it as a danger to ourselves rather than a benefit—we need only to survey the years of psycho-physiological confusion through which each child must pass.

That most adults, even today, have no control of their passions is quite evident in the debilitating effects of their expression. We become constant victims of the twin problems of license and suppression. The greatest danger for the mystically-inclined seems to be that of suppression, whereas, with the majority, license is justified when not actually glorified.

Most of us find it quite difficult to perceive the difference between *abandoning* and suppressing a pattern of behaviour. Abandonment of evil is quite different from hating evil or working against it. In fact, "abandonment" implies that one leaves the old only because the new has dominated one's *life attention,* and not because an overt mental judgment is constantly being made—a process which seems to hypnotize one's attention on the very thing he seeks to end, thus intensifying the problem rather than alleviating it. Yet, despite the difficulties and pitfalls, the task of at least *beginning* to heal ourselves must be undertaken before we can be a healthy catalyst in the body "humanity." And this thought brings us full circle to the view that *health as a unit* lies in the direction of abandoning the personal life in favor of a life devoted to "being in its collectivity."

To return for a moment to the child and his struggle to organize

and control the functions of his body: This process is interesting and acceptable to parents only because they recognize it as a transitional state which will fade before increased control and orderly function; yet for the first few years of his life we could, from the adult standpoint, view the child as a physiological tragedy. It may be in something of the same sense that *we* are viewed by more advanced humans, as they watch our sporadic evolution in a spiritual direction.

While with the child, control and use of the body was a *goal,* as adults we must now transform the "achieved vehicle" into a *means* for seeking a higher goal; one of reunion with the ALL—a constant weakening to eradication of the sense of separateness; a gradual penetration into the meaning of such phrases as, "to act for and as the Self of all beings."

POSITIVE FAITH AND BELIEF

I believe that reason cannot be effective unless man has hope and belief. Goethe was right when he said that the deepest distinction between various historical periods is that between belief and disbelief, and when he added that all epochs in which belief dominates are brilliant, uplifting, and fruitful, while those in which disbelief dominates vanish because nobody cares to devote himself to the unfruitful. No doubt the thirteenth century, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, were ages of belief and hope. I am afraid that the Western World in the twentieth century deceives itself about the fact that it has lost hope and belief. Truly, where there is no belief in man, the belief in machines will not save us from vanishing; on the contrary, this "belief" will only accelerate the end. Either the Western World will be capable of creating a renaissance of humanism in which the fullest developments of man's humanity, and not production and work, are the central issues—or the West will perish as many other great civilizations have.

—ERICH FROMM

YOUTH FORUM

Sometimes, as one observes the people surrounding one, it is natural to wonder about their motivations in life—and about one's own motivations as well. What are the assumptions "about life" which commonly underlie actions? What are most people trying to achieve during these short harried years on earth?

You can easily avoid this question by declaring it impossible to answer, since every individual has slightly different assumptions about life, and therefore different motivations. But the queries are no less important, nor would it necessarily be impossible to answer them, at least in a general way, if only you could show that there are certain characteristics of our civilization which make it generically different from past civilizations, and which require (or at least make difficult to avoid) a new kind of stance in the face of life, a new set of assumptions.

There is one such characteristic, which indicates that the whole quality of civilized life has undergone a change during the last half-century: the present lack of faith in the Judeo-Christian scheme. Regardless of any statistics about church attendance, most men's belief in the God of Abraham has in general been undermined by our mechanized way of life and in particular by modern science, which declares ridiculous the idea of a heaven above the firmament or a hell beneath the earth. This is not to say that science has disposed of Christianity, for, as always in the past, Christianity has changed with the times, become more sophisticated, and now declares God to be infinite and invisible—though, unfortunately, still a Being. Nor is it to say that all Christians before the advent of modern science had crude and narrow ideas about God. Augustine, for example, in the fourth century, had far wider conceptions and deeper convictions than most men since. All that the statement implies is that it is now quite difficult for the "common man" to believe in God, for common men are so called because of their "commonness," and they are no longer allowed to form mental pictures about a benevolent Father sitting among the clouds.

There is no space to inquire into the various other distinguishing characteristics of our times—primarily characteristics concerning man's present psychological self-consciousness. But this one characteristic of spiritual solitude, this *"silence d'un Dieu disparu,"* is certainly sufficient to account for many of mankind's assumptions and motivations.

As indicated at the beginning, people are individuals, and may not without injustice be reduced to types. But can it not be said that generally people assume the universe to be vast and cold, blindly evolving through chance mutations, and yet, at the same time, that people basically dislike these brutal "facts of life"? If these uncomfortable assumptions are real to many, then there seem several attitudes that one can take towards them, depending upon inner strength and disposition. First of all, one may to all practical purposes ignore the assumptions, and go through life *as though* the universe were made expressly for man to go on forever, eternally chatty, and comfy and kind (to animals). Living such a life is like wearing a tuxedo in the jungle, in the face of another assumption that life really is blind and predatory. Perhaps, then, the supposed rise in church attendance primarily represents a wish to transform the jungle into a lush Eden, a sort of garden party where tuxedos are always in order. One does not want to be too harsh, but it does seem that the wishes of many to avoid confronting the world's apparent meaninglessness make meaninglessness inevitable.

Others there are whose basic assumptions are in no way different, yet who lead what seems an almost tragically heroic existence, simply by facing the "facts" and yet choosing positive moral action *in spite* of the universal absurdity. This is *"l'acte gratuia"* of Anouilh, the free action of a free spirit, uninfluenced by the exigencies of worldly life. There is real strength and beauty in this attitude, though one sometimes wonders if some of the proponents of this existential view of life might not be actually disappointed if they found out that there is meaning and purpose to the universe.

Yet these same assumptions have been transformed into human action through still another attitude, a much more prevalent (and completely unheroic) one. It is the attitude of those who, convinced that the universe is a heartless jungle, have "gone native." These are the scoffers, the cynics, who think themselves ultramodern, whereas in reality they are completely atavistic. These are

the people whose heroes have been stereotyped in detective and adventure stories, those who don't feel that it is particularly wrong to stab someone in the back (or undercut him in business, or throw away tons of food to keep prices high, etc., etc.), but that such behavior is simply in accordance with the law of life, which means the law of the jungle.

These, then, are a few of the attitudes and ways of life which result directly from the single assumption that life is without direction. The two jungle inhabitants, the one in dinner dress, the other in war-paint, represent different but equally perverse attitudes. The one blithely goes on with his pleasant conversations as though his personality were immortal, the other fights through life for whatever pleasures he can get, as though at any instant he would be cut off in mid-stride. Put a little differently, the secret unspeakable enemy of the one is death, of the other, life. What a tragedy it would be for James Bond or Richard Diamond if the world were not blown up as expected, and they had to live on to the age of ninety-three!

It seems, then, that none of the attitudes spoken of, perhaps not even the existential "realism" of men like Anouilh, is in any ultimate sense realistic. If men really must be convinced that they live only once, would not at least some of them want to discard all "stances" whatsoever, and spend every waking minute searching for meaning—out of the very basic fear that they might come to the end of their precious fleeting years only to discover that they had not lived?

Fear of letting life pass by unseized—this can be one of the most urgent incentives to man's search for knowledge. And yet, as one begins to learn something of the real nature of that search, one cannot help faltering a bit in spite of himself; for it becomes evident that in order to have even the most basic credentials for knowledge, one must struggle ceaselessly to feel everything—all the hatred and love, pity, beauty, wonder, all the intense and unrelieved suffering, of mankind. One must realize from the bottom of one's heart that there are children in this world who are starving! One must truly feel the derisive laughter of the teen-age gang that passes him in the street, for that laughter was meant to hurt. One must, in short, make one's heart available to the world, like a great unprotected wound which will not heal until this whole sick world is healed.

VARIOUS STATES OF DEVACHAN

THE speculations of the Western mind have hitherto scarcely ever depicted any higher future life than that of the *Kama* and *Rupa lokas,* or the lower, intra-terrestrial "spirit-worlds." According even to exoteric Buddhistic philosophy, discarnate beings are divided into three classes. (1) *Kamavachara,* or those who are still under the dominion of the passions in *Kamaloka;* (2) *Rupavachara,* or those who have progressed to a higher stage, but still retain vestiges of their old form in *Rupa loka;* and (3) *Arupavachara,* or those who are become formless entities in the *Arupa lokas* of the highest Devachan.

All depends on the degree of the monad's spirituality and aspirations. The astral body of the fourth principle—called *Kama,* because inseparable from *Kama loka*—is always within the attraction of terrestrial magnetism; and the monad has to work itself free of the still finer yet equally potent attractions of its (lower) *Manas* before it ever reaches in its series of Devachanic states, the upper-*Arupa* regions. Therefore, there are various degrees of Devachanees. In those of the *Arupa lokas* the entities are as *subjective* and truly "not even as material as that ethereal body-shadow—the Mayavi-rupa." But only very few reach there skipping the lower degrees. There are those Devachanees, men of the highest moral calibre and goodness when on earth, who, owing to their sympathy *for old intellectual researches and especially for unfinished mental work,* are for centuries in the Rupa-lokas in a strict Devachanic isolation—literally so, since men and loved relatives have all vanished out of sight before this intense and purely spiritual passion for intellectual pursuit.

For an example of the "study-bound" condition, take the mental state of the dying Berzelius, whose last thought was one of despair that his work should be interrupted by death. This is *Tanha* (Hindu *Trishna*) or an unsatisfied yearning which must exhaust itself before the entity can move on to the purely *a-rupa* condition. A pro-

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NOTE.—A student's collation from Theosophical sources.

vision is made for every case, and in each case it is created by the dying man's last uppermost desire. The scholar who had mainly lived under the influence of *manas,* and for the pleasure of developing his highest physical intelligence, kept absorbed in the mysteries of the material universe, will still be magnetically held by his mental attractions to scholars and their work, influencing and being influenced by them *subjectively* (though in a manner quite different from that known in séance-rooms and by mediums) until the energy exhausts itself and *Buddhi* becomes the only regnant influence.

The same rule applies to all the activities, whether of passion or sentiment, which entangle the traveling monad (the Individuality) in the relationships of any given birth. The discarnate must consecutively mount each rung of the ladder of being upward from the earthly subjective to the *absolutely* subjective. And when this limited Nirvanic state of Devachan is attained, the entity enjoys it and its vivid though spiritual realities until that phase of Karma is satisfied and the physical attraction to the next earth-life asserts itself. In Devachan, therefore, the entity is affected by and reciprocally affects the psychic state of any other entity whose relationship is so close with it as to survive the purgatorial evolution of the lower post-mortem spheres. Their intercourse will be sensed spiritually, and still, so far as any relationship until now postulated by Western thinkers goes, each will be "dissociated from the other."

Yet, as the monad moves on from birth to birth and passes its lower and Devachanic spheres after each fresh earthly existence, the mutual ties created in each birth must weaken and at last grow inert, before it can be reborn. The record of those relationships imperishably endures in the Akasa, and they can always be reviewed when, in any birth, the being evolves his latent spiritual powers to the "fourth stage of Dhyana"; but their hold upon the being gradually relaxes. This is accomplished in each inter-natal Devachan; and when the personal links—magnetic or psychic, as one may prefer to call them—binding the Devachanee to other entities of the next previous life, whether relatives, friends, or family, are worn out, he is free to move on in his cyclic path. Were this obliteration of personal ties not a fact, each being would be traveling around the Kalpa entangled in the meshes of his past relationships with his myriad fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives, etc., of his numberless births: a jumble, indeed!

letters • questions • comment

It is likely that this question has been asked and commented upon a number of times previously, though I am not, myself, able to recall any such occasions. In H. P. Blavatsky's statement of the Third Proposition of The Secret Doctrine, *she speaks of an "obligatory pilgrimage" of the soul. This compound term sometimes seems to have unwelcome connotations, since "obligatory" often carries with it the thought of being forced—and, in this instance, "forced" in a predetermined direction. One phrase of the Gayatri speaks of a return back to the Sacred Seat, and, since each one of us tends to labor to preserve individuality, the question arises as to whether that individuality is simply on probation, so to speak, preceding a return to the All—the fully harmonious state of being.*

Discussion might well begin, in an only apparently roundabout way, with a consideration of the word "harmonious," as applied to states of consciousness. In the language of music, nothing is inharmonious in and of itself. A dissonant is dissonant because of its relationship to preceding chords or notes. If one is composing a musical score, the true "obligation" is simply to the theme which various chords will substantiate or set off in relief, but the point of departure is, so to speak, a choice or selection. In terms of the philosophy of karma, one undertakes his own obligations with the initiation of every action, because he will continue to compose until the end of a manvantaric period—or, on a smaller scale, until the end of a physical life. Neither death nor Pralaya amounts to a time for a formalized inspection of a composition of a life or lives, but both are occasions when the author, one might say, has temporarily run out of paper and ink.

There are, actually, two different connotations to "obligatory." The first and most common meaning signifies a coercion by circumstances which demand that a certain task be faced and performed. We might consider the analogy of a writer whose profession will involve him in the necessity of fulfilling a contract for a promised

manuscript—and to complete it by a certain deadline. The other and more subtle meaning of obligation may derive from an entirely different kind of compulsion, which originates internally and without any reference to immediate external factors. The musician, the artist who paints, or the writer who writes because he cannot help himself, from a burgeoning drive toward expression, is also "obliged." The impulsion, however, comes from the center of his own being.

It is in this sense, we may believe, that the words "obligatory pilgrimage" are employed in Madame Blavatsky's statement. The "pilgrimage" is not toward a predetermined goal, since every Pralaya is followed by a succeeding Manvantara. If the destiny of man were ultimately in some heaven or Nirvana, and particularly if the destiny were set by an omniscient intelligence—a God who has the wisdom to tell individual man what he should become—human existence would, of course, become an arbitrary testing, rather than a matter of self-directed evolution.

There is no doubt, though, that H.P.B. has a fondness for employing the term "pilgrimage" in relation to the journey of the soul. In *The Key to Theosophy,* under the discussion of "Annihilation," she speaks of "that pilgrimage which we call 'the cycle of re-births'." She refers to the intervals of post-mortem life as simply being interruptions, so far as the true progress of the "thread soul" is concerned, and continues:

> Such intervals, their limitation notwithstanding, do not prevent the Ego, while ever perfecting itself, from following undeviatingly, though gradually and slowly, the path to its last transformation, when that Ego, having reached its goal, becomes a divine being. These intervals and stages help towards this final result instead of hindering it; and without such limited intervals the divine Ego could never reach its ultimate goal.

The content of these statements, in a chapter dealing with questions on "annihilation," suggests an emphasis on "prevent," for H.P.B. is not saying that every ego *proceeds* towards a predetermined goal, *inevitably*—simply because she does say that the ego *may* "follow undeviatingly, though gradually and slowly" the path to becoming a divine being." And "last transformation" and "ultimate goal" need not be taken to mean a predestination—rather to suggest the emergence of man's state of consciousness to one that is so much higher that the typical after-death state of our humanity no longer

exists. Further, the "interruptions" are not only those caused by wishful or dreamy thinking, resulting in a prolonged post-mortem state called "devachan," but are occasioned by whatever "unharmonious" choices the individual makes regarding the opportunities for refinement and transformation which life offers him.

As has been said so many times, the perfected being is simply one who has accomplished all that may be accomplished in a certain cycle of evolution. And this Theosophical interpretation may be applied to the closing passage of *The Dhammapada*:

> Him I call a Brahamana who knows his former lives, who knows heaven and hell, who has reached the end of births, who is a sage of perfect knowledge and who has accomplished all that has to be accomplished.

But how is one to accomplish "all that has to be accomplished"? Certainly not by plotting *his* progress as one would by checking each day's distance on a road map. It is the "traveling while at rest" that counts on this journey, and there is always some element of personal *un*rest when one is self-conscious of his progress or tries to define, in terms of an achieved status, the "goal." It is this awareness which we find expressed in the paradoxical sayings of Lao-tse. As for instance:

> Other men have plenty, while I alone seem to have lost all. . . .
>
> I am unsettled as the ocean, drifting as though I had no stopping-place. . . .
>
> Lonely though I am and unlike other men, yet I revere the Foster-Mother, Tao.

The true progression is certainly a subtle one. We find an intimation of its nature in the last writings of Carl Jung ("Retrospection," in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*). Jung writes:

> It is important to have a secret, a premonition of things unknown. It fills life with something impersonal, a *numinosum*. A man who has never experienced that has missed something important. He must sense that he lives in a world which in some respects is mysterious; that things happen and can be experienced which remain inexplicable; that not everything which happens can be anticipated. The unexpected and the incredible belong in this world. Only then is life whole. For me the world has from the beginning been infinite and ungraspable.

on the lookout

Supreme Court and Future of Religion

The recent Supreme Court decision (June 17) outlawing prayer and Bible-reading in the public schools reads in part:

> It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization.
>
> It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistent with the First Amendment.
>
> But the exercises here do not fall into these categories. They are religious exercises, required by the states in violation of the First Amendment that the government maintain strict neutrality, neither aiding nor opposing religion.

In effect, this means that the highest authority in constitutional matters flatly denies the right of any Christian public school teacher to *assume* the truth of the Christian interpretation; he may not, by indirection any more than directly, support partisan doctrine.

What is "Teaching Religion"?

Reaction to the Supreme Court decision in the press has ranged all the way from characterizations of the ruling as a "triumph for democracy" to a "triumph of communism." From a Theosophical point of view, however, the most significant phase of this development will tend to be obscured by conventional controversy.

A letter to the New York *Times* (June 29), written by Theodore Brameld, professor of Educational Philosophy at Boston University, is an excellent statement of opportunities which now exist for the sort of "religious education" conceived by the Theosophical Society in 1875. Dr. Brameld writes:

> The key issue here, which most of the debate overlooks, centers in the word "teach." If to teach means to indoctrinate any given doctrine as the only true and right one, it is inimical to democratic education. If, however, to teach means to study critically and comparatively the weaknesses and strengths of a

wide range of doctrines, if it enables learners thereby to share in the conclusions that they can reach in the light of this kind of study, then religion has just as legitimate a place in the curriculum as any other conflicting doctrines.

I am only reasserting what Jefferson had in mind when he implied that public education is the central power through which a people becomes sufficiently enlightened to govern itself. But enlightenment cannot occur when any important area of human life is excluded from serious, intelligent attention. However controversial, no area can rightly be excluded, whether it be politics, economics, morality or religion. As numerous authorities on religion, conservative as well as liberal, agree, moreover, the religious area of life is capable of enlightened study as well as any other.

A "New Frontier"

Dr. Brameld continues:

The decision invites long overdue reconsideration of how public education may provide effective study of the role of religion in the experience of mankind, and how it may do so without loading the dice through indoctrination. To be sure, this new opportunity will be far from easy to implement. It will require, for example, comparison of all the great religious movements—not merely the Judaic-Christian but the Buddhist, Hindu, Humanist and others. It will need carefully trained teachers. It will afford first-hand acquaintance with the practices of these religions. And it will offer completely free opportunity for any learner to reconsider his own religious preferences should he care to do so.

This kind of teaching and learning, which is antithetical to the kind of indoctrination finally outlawed by the Supreme Court, opens a new frontier for educational adventures. At first, to be sure, experimentation in religious study should be attempted only at the senior high school level and in carefully selected communities. As it proves workable, however, I am convinced that it will become acceptable to most communities. For it will demonstrate to the American people that the choice is not between teaching one religious doctrine and teaching none at all. Rather the choice is between bad education and good education—between the teaching that forces beliefs of any sort upon learners and teaching that enables them to grow into citizens capable of evaluating, comparing, examining, and finally choosing for themselves.

"Education in Religion"

In the context of Dr. Brameld's letter, it is pertinent to call attention to a series which appears in *Manas*—May 8 through June 12. We quote from the issue of June 5:

In search of an inviting yet clearly defined approach to the relation of education to religion, we come to one basic idea—that the human mind, whether of a child or an adult, can learn nothing new, discover nothing worth knowing, if the experience of religion is sectarian. One may *believe,* of course, but that is an entirely different matter.

To explore man's inner need for a feeling of transcendence, and of the permanence of the self or soul, does not, however, require a theological point of departure. One can turn to the scriptures that have moved countless people according to rote and find that they also move him, but through his spontaneous reaction.

"Authority" in respect to the great scriptures of the world is likely to have a debilitating effect upon the creative side of the individual mind. A great scripture, like a great work of art, should be approached anew each day, as if it were fresh to us and we to it. For *we,* it is to be hoped, have ourselves changed meanwhile and grown in perspective, even if only a little. From this point of view, then, the attempt to remember what we have heard or read in interpretation of a passage, a chapter, or an entire scripture, is not really very important, unless we use the recollection simply as a point of further departure.

Great scriptures are in one sense like the music or the poetry which has reached into the hearts of so many that it has blended into the common human heritage. If these "scriptures" are approached without notice of any sectarian position, they may be found to say much of both psychology and philosophy, as well as of religion. This sort of "comparative religion" can be natural to all men, and, through parents, to all children.

The Function of Philosophy

As Dr. Brameld intimates, "good teaching" in religion necessitates the acquisition and implementation of a philosophical point of view. Agreeable to a Theosophical outlook, *Manas* (May 15) suggests specific ways by which metaphysical considerations can be seen to have everyday psychological importance:

There may be said to be three broad areas of metaphysical inquiry about which the human mind is never altogether unconcerned: (1) What is the origin of man, and, in the light of that origin, what is his actual relationship to other beings and finally to the whole of life? (2) What are the laws and processes of interaction between the Whole, or the universe, and the part, man? Is "justice" a cosmic fact? (3) Is the man immortal as an individual, and if so, what should be his guide in selecting and weighing life's experiences? What goal may be reached?

Every religion or philosophy, in the last analysis, is based upon

proposed answers to questions in these areas of inquiry. More important, the thought and action of each individual are profoundly influenced by his opinions on these abstruse subjects, whether consciously adopted or unconsciously absorbed from church background or general environment. This is not, of course, to say that every thoughtful man employs the conceptual terms of philosophy, nor that he is to be identified by his ability to state fundamental questions as formal issues in metaphysics. For the personal consciousness of the individual man, the essential elements of human experience are simply happiness and suffering. Yet when he seeks to *understand* these states, which he alternately passes through, when he strives to find some measure of control over them, he needs perspective and orientation—basic orientation. Thus he arrives at the portal of the great, impersonal questions, and is driven to find answers complete enough to provide at least a temporary working basis for thought and decision.

Psychiatry Towards Theosophy

Dr. Viktor E. Frankl's revised and enlarged edition of *From Death-Camp to Existentialism*, now published under the title, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Beacon Press, 1963, $3.50), clearly reveals a consistent Theosophic orientation. For example, Dr. Frankl, in his concluding chapter, affirms that the psychiatrist has no right to assume "that the human world is a terminal point in the evolution of the cosmos." It is in this context that Dr. Frankl evaluates the meaning of human suffering—as having positive as well as negative meaning. Under what might be called a Buddhist subheading, "Life's Transitoriness," Dr. Frankl writes:

> To these things which seem to take meaning away from human life belong not only suffering but dying as well, not only distress but also death. I never tire of saying that the only really transitory aspects of life are the potentialities; but as soon as they are actualized, they are rendered realities at that very moment; they are saved and delivered into the past, wherein they are rescued and preserved from transitoriness. For, in the past, nothing is irrecoverably lost but everything irrevocably stored.

"Nothing Can Be Done Away With"

Dr. Frankl continues:

> Nothing can be undone, and nothing can be done away with. The transitoriness of our existence in no way makes it meaningless. But it does constitute our responsibleness; for everything hinges upon our realizing the essentially transitory possibilities. Man constantly makes his choice concerning the mass of present

potentialities; which of these will be condemned to non-being and which will be actualized? Which choice made an actuality once and forever, an immortal "footprint in the sands of time"? At any moment, man must decide, for better or for worse, what will be the monument of his existence.

The "Meaning of Suffering"

It is obvious that we learn, as Dr. Frankl says, in various ways: "The meaning of life always changes, but it never ceases to be. According to logotherapy, we can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by doing a deed, (2) by experiencing a value, (3) by suffering. The first, the way of achievement or accomplishment, is quite obvious. The second and third need further elaboration." The greatest of men, indeed, have found a good deal of "meaning" in life while suffering:

> Whenever one is confronted with an inescapable, unavoidable situation, whenever one has to face a fate which cannot be changed, e.g., an incurable disease, such as an inoperable cancer; just then one is given a last chance to actualize the highest value, to fulfill the deepest meaning, the meaning of suffering. For what matters above all is the attitude we take toward suffering, the attitude in which we take our suffering upon ourselves.
>
> In this context Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, professor of psychology at Purdue University, contends, in her article on logotherapy, that "our current mental-hygiene philosophy stresses the idea that people ought to be happy, that unhappiness is a symptom of maladjustment. Such a value system might be responsible for the fact that the burden of unavoidable unhappiness is increased by unhappiness about being unhappy." And in another paper she expresses the hope that logotherapy "may help counteract unhealthy trends in the present-day culture of the United States, where the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading" so that "he is not only unhappy, but also ashamed of being unhappy."

Unconditional Growth

> There are situations in which one is cut off from the opportunity to do one's work or to enjoy one's life; but what never can be ruled out is the unavoidability of suffering. In accepting this challenge to suffer bravely, life has a meaning up to the last moment, and it retains this meaning literally to the end. In other words, life's meaning is an unconditional one for it even includes the potential meaning of suffering.

An Administrator Who Educated

Life's composite eulogy (May 3) on the late A. Whitney Griswold, President of Yale University, manages to transmit, by way of "famous quotes," something of the spirit of genuine philosophy from this forthright man of principle. For example, in respect to "loyalty oaths" for students applying for aid under the Federal Aid program, Griswold said:

> Loyalty cannot be coerced or compelled. If men are born loyal, the only kind of loyalty that survives infancy in any thinking person is the kind that survives curiosity and withstands criticism and even doubt. . . .
>
> The only loyalty upon which true reliance can be placed is the kind evoked by the inherent virtue of the cause or institution or individual toward which the loyalty is felt. In creating this kind of loyalty, oaths are of little value compared to the devotion of a man who has been free to examine and evaluate the evidence and, on the strength of that experience, in Cromwell's words, knows "what he fights for and loves what he knows."

Criticism of Organized Mediocrity

Other *Life* selections from Griswold are encouragingly provocative:

> A people that is afraid to expose its political and social institutions to the curiosity and criticism of the rising generation shouts its insecurity to the world.
>
> * * *
>
> The family has become too scared of its children; the children too insecure in their remoteness from their parents; and the church too much of a social welfare organization for the good of the family, or the church or society.
>
> * * *
>
> Conversation . . . is drowned out by singing commercials . . . it is hushed and shushed in dimly lighted parlors by television audiences who used to read, argue. . . .
>
> * * *
>
> Could *Hamlet* have been written by a committee? . . . Creative ideas . . . spring from individuals.

Biological Tides

Under the title, "The Subtle Tides of Life," Rutherford Platt records results of some interesting experiments with plants, animals, and humans (*Reader's Digest*, April), thus demonstrating again the universality of the Second Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*—Life's cyclic motion, its ebb and flow. Mr. Platt describes an experi-

ment wherein oysters, transplanted from their native habitat in Long Island Sound to Evanston, continued their regular cycle of opening and closing for two weeks and then suspended it for four hours, thereafter opening when the moon was at its height—when, that is, the tide would have been at the full if Evanston were on the seacoast. Mr. Platt continues:

> Almost all plants and animals have special cycles of behavior linked to outside forces. And in recent years numerous studies have indicated that man, too, is influenced by cycles. His temperature and blood pressure rise and fall at regular intervals. His moods and his energy follow regular swings.
>
> Many of the studies suggest that the bio-rhythms of both humans and lower organisms are linked to such forces as fluctuations in barometric pressure, gravitational field and electricity in the air. These earthly forces are, in turn, affected by forces from outer space—by the phases of the moon, by undulations in the pear-shaped electromagnetic field that surrounds the earth, by showers of gamma rays, X rays, cosmic rays and other electromagnetic waves emanating from extraterrestrial sources that bombard the earth's atmosphere. Thus the regular sun-spot cycle, for example, may influence us. In all these disturbances there are transient fluctuations and broad regular swings as well, hourly, daily, monthly rhythms, and longer.

A Question Arises

"If the earth's electromagnetic fields can influence snails, what about people?" asks Mr. Platt, and gives one possible answer:

> Dr. Harold S. Burr, emeritus professor of anatomy at Yale University School of Medicine, states that what establishes the pattern of a particular human brain, and "regulates and controls" it, is actually a complex magnetic field. . . . It is quite possible, therefore, that in a manner not yet discovered, earthly magnetic fields may influence human behavior, their rhythmic ebb and flow producing within our brains cyclical changes in feeling, alertness and sensibility, perhaps even stirring the memory or inciting ideas.

Other Findings

Dr. Wilhelm Fliess, of the University of Berlin, asserted, on the basis of a 20-year study, that there are "two basic cycles in human nature: a 23-day Physical Cycle of vitality, strength, resistance, and a 28-day Sensitive Cycle of mood, sensitivity, feelings." Dr. Alfred Teltscher, a professor of engineering at Innsbruck University, Austria, corroborated Fliess' findings and also "showed a third cycle

of human behavior: a 33-day intellectual cycle of memory, alertness and reasoning power." In 1932, a work survey conducted by a psychologist and an endocrinologist for the Pennsylvania Railroad gave unexpected results:

> For more than a year daily records were kept of conversation, mood, outlook, physical condition and work—everything having to do with the total, active, thinking man. Nobody was looking for a cycle, and it was a great surprise when the men's ability, the sum of all their physical and mental factors, was found to rise and fall on an average frequency of 33 days. The rhythm was "as dependable as that of the tides."

Human Bio-rhythms

The article concludes:

> More recent studies in Switzerland and Germany also report finding these three cycles of human behavior, now called PSI: Physical, Sensitive, Intellectual. They appear, the studies suggest, to begin at birth, continuing on their 23-, 28-, and 33-day frequencies throughout life. Being merely a gentle ebb and flow of the strength of the nervous system, the cycles do not interrupt reflexes, instincts or brain powers, but only enhance and abate them. They are easily overridden by will power, habit, and learned skills. Yet they appear to be nonetheless real, and when the ups and downs of the three cycles coincide, their effects augment each other. . . .
>
> All these intriguing investigations serve to remind us that we, like all other creatures, are part of nature, tuned to her natural rhythms, our lives responding to the ceaseless ebb and flow of the universe.

Basic Questions of Philosophy

A pamphlet issued by the "Peace Lodge," of the Theosophical Society (Hyde, Cheshire, England) is introduced by this heading. In pursuance of the second object of the T.S., which "includes the study of philosophy, as well as science and comparative religion," this Lodge held twelve study-discussion meetings in the spring and summer of 1962 "in an attempt to get the hang of what philosophy is about." The issues were considered under these headings:

> Epistemology—the Problems of Knowing; Ontology—the Problems of Being; Cosmogony—the Origination of Energies; Cosmology—the Vastness of Energy-Workings; Microcosmology—Man's Creative Energy Participation; Mythology—Apprehending the Creative Energy; Astrology—Man's Cosmic Affinities; Psychology—Consciousness and Behavior; Eschatology—Death and Survival; Theogony—Arising of Man's God-Ideas;

Theology—the Rationalizing of Man's God-Imaginings; Theosophy—Man's Direct Experiencing of the Godhead; Logic—Reasoning; Linguistics—Communication; Aesthetics—the Appreciation and Creation of Beauty; Ethics—Good and Evil; Sociology—the Ordering of Human Society; Theurgy—Illumination.

While the titles of some of the subjects may be rather unfamiliar to many Theosophical students, these idea divisions are certainly not new. The general public, meanwhile, is becoming more and more familiar with many Theosophical conceptions under a new nomenclature, introduced by the widespread popular literature on psychology, sociology, etc. And so comes a new vocabulary with which the Theosophical student may desire to familiarize himself.

Method of Study

As an example of the methodical and systematic way the Peace Lodge course was handled, we note the following from "Epistemology":

> Epistemology is "the theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge"; being concerned with the process of knowing it is an aspect of psychology that can be turned upon psychology itself—seeking to know how to get at the truth about psychology. Psychology embraces processes of error and illusion and impulse, and correct understanding of these is part of knowledge. Epistemology is concerned with what methods yield true knowledge, in psychology as well as in other fields. . . .
>
> In East and West, philosophers have differed about whether our sense perceptive experiences of the objective world are real or illusory. Materialists regard that world as the sole reality; philosophic idealists see the observing mind as real, and the external world as of dubious validity. The solipsist takes the extreme view that there is no conclusive proof that anything or anyone else exists; only one's self is certain. . . .

Questions

> What is truth? What are the modes or aspects of truth?
>
> Of what value is the intellect? Is it an instrument for acquiring truth? Or for detecting error?
>
> Can truth be acquired? Or is it a discerning? Or an identifying?
>
> Is the intellect an instrument for discerning, or identifying?
>
> What evidences are there of more direct, intuitional modes of truth-discerning?
>
> Is mere intellectuality arid, barren—if devoid of an available higher power? If so, what is the nature of that higher power?
>
> What is the use, and what are the limitations of the logical

processes of the intellect? Can there be apprehension of truth without intellect?

The forms of analysis brought out in these studies can be readily correlated with the Theosophical teachings. It will, of course, remain for each to determine the value of such a project.

On Fluoridation of Water

Controversy continues in both Britain and the United States over the fluoridation of public water supplies. Arguments against such contamination are well-publicized and available. In April, 1958, the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons went on record to "condemn the addition of any substance to public water supplies for the purpose of affecting the bodies or the bodily or mental functions of the consumers."

Health for All (England) published in its February issue an article titled "Fluoridation Means Poisoned Water," which quoted the opinions of many physicians against the use of the sodium fluoride additive. The following, by five leading New York physicians, is representative:

> It is now clear that fluoride is a potentially harmful substance when present in the water supply in any amount. Those who want their children to have fluoride can give it individually in measured doses, and more safely, reliably and cheaply than when put in the water. We can see no justifiable reason why everyone in the city should be needlessly subjected to any degree of lifelong risk such as is created when a known poison is added to the water. We can accept no compromise with the established principle that the city's water supply must be kept as safe as possible for everyone.